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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MUTHANNA OFFICIAL SAYS IRANIAN INTIMIDATION LED TO
HIS RETIREMENT

Classified By: PRT MUTHANNA TEAM LEADER BRADLEY LYNCH FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) and (d).

This is a Muthanna PRT reporting cable.

11. (C) SUMMARY: Hakim Khazal Khashan, a member of the Muthanna Provincial Council (PC), announced his resignation on 7 July. He told PRToffs that he decided to leave government because his anti-corruption efforts had been stymied by a broad range of dishonest political actors, and because Iranian interference was widespread in local government. Khashan said that he had been targeted by an Iranian assassination unit due to his membership in the Middle Euphrates Assembly Party, which he said Iran thinks received support from the U.S. and Arab states. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On 7 July, Hakim Khazal Khashan, a Muthanna Provincial Council (PC) member from the Middle Euphrates Assembly Party announced his resignation. In his role as head of the Integrity Committee in the previous PC, he had actively lobbied to clean up provincial government. Khashan contacted Muthanna PRT prior to the official announcement, and stated that his anti-corruption efforts had been stymied by a range of dishonest political actors in Muthanna. He alleged that Iranian interference was widespread in Muthanna and that many local government officials take bribes or support the interests of neighboring countries, like Iran. Khashan explained that recently he had been warned by senior Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) commanders to be very careful since there were threats against him.

13. (C) Khashan called PRToffs from Kuwait on July 13 to inform them he had departed Iraq abruptly after being warned to leave the country by a close friend who works for General Shawani, director of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service. Khashan claimed that his friend told him that elite Iranian assassination units had infiltrated Muthanna Province to target individuals who worked contrary to Iranian interests. He believed that he had been targeted because of his affiliation with the Middle Euphrates Assembly, a local political party, which the Iranians believe receives support from the U.S. and other Arab nations. Khashan said he planned to return to Iraq in six to twelve months if security conditions permit.

14. (C) Comment: Given Khashan's leadership on local anti-corruption efforts, his abrupt departure from the political scene may impede local capacity development and democratic governance. If the stated circumstances surrounding his resignation and exit from Iraq are true, it would illustrate that negative Iranian influence can undermine the effectiveness and tenure of democratically elected officials, even in a calm area like Muthanna. END COMMENT.
FORD